

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

NRCS professionals work with producers to develop a conservation plan, design conservation practices, and provide guidance to help implement the plan.



What Practices Can Receive Funding?

Practices that receive high priority for funding include those that address the following resource issues: soil quality, surface water quality, airborne particulate matter, threatened or endangered plant and animal habitat, water quantity for irrigation, and excess nutrients or pesticides in runoff water.

New for 2007 Practices that address air quality issues in NJ will be eligible for payment! These include:

- **Use of alternative fuels** (biodiesel and ethanol) or power (solar, wind, methane): payments will be made for the amount of alternative fuel (gallons) or power (KWh) used for all on-farm purposes.
- **Installation of solar pumps** for low-flow irrigations systems and livestock watering facilities: payments will be for the pump, panel, controller, and back-up battery.
- **Replacement of older diesel irrigation pumps:** payments will be made for new Tier 2 or Tier 3 engines between 50 and 150 HP as long as the replaced engine is destroyed.

NRCS, in conjunction with the State Technical Committee, lists the eligible practices available each year that address the local resource concerns. The current list of eligible practices is available on the NJ website at <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip>.

How Does Signup for EQIP Work?

Producers can sign up for EQIP at any time at their local Service Center (see reverse). In addition to the basic application form, all applicants are required to complete a "self-assessment" workbook in order to determine their qualifications and need for the specific conservation practices offered by the program.

NJ Priority Concerns & Practices

1. **Nutrient and pesticide runoff from agricultural fields** – nutrient management, pest management, agricultural chemical handling facilities, and buffer practices
2. **Excess nutrients in concentrated runoff water** – manure handling, transfer, and storage systems, barnyard runoff control practices, and development of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
3. **Forage condition for grazing** – prescribed grazing systems, including livestock water and control of access to streams
4. **Erosion on Cropland** – sheet and rill erosion control, concentrated runoff control, and gully erosion repair and prevention
5. **Water quantity for irrigation** – low flow watering systems and water management plans
6. **Air Quality** – biodiesel or ethanol fuel and solar or wind power use, new diesel irrigation pump engines, reduced tillage, windbreaks and shelterbelts

What are the Payment Rates and Terms?

Practices payments are made using one of two methods. Management practices are reimbursed at 100% of a pre-determined rate for up to three years, called a Flat Rate. Structural and seeding practices are reimbursed at a pre-determined % of an established Average Cost.

Additionally, contracts with practices originally scheduled for the second or third years will have the payments automatically adjusted to reflect any future changes in the payment rates for those practices.

NRCS will be assessing all applications received by October 27, 2006 for potential funding during 2007.

What are the Applicant Qualifications?

Applicants must own or control the land, agree to implement specific eligible conservation practices within specified time frames, and qualify for farmland assessment. Applicants must be compliant with all conservation provisions of the 2002 farm bill, and have current crop and producer records on file with USDA's Farm Service Agency.

How are Applicants Ranked?

Applications are first screened for environmental risk based on their existing operation and the existing soil and water resource hazards. Only those applications for practices on land where the greatest potential environmental risk exist are selected for further review.

Applicants are then ranked based on how the requested practices address the national program priorities and the state and local resource concerns that have been identified by the local work groups. Practices must be cost-effective to achieve the best rank.

What is the Contract Period?

A contract detailing the practices, payment rates, schedule for implementation, and operation and maintenance requirements must be signed by all parties before work can begin. Contracts are for a minimum of 1 year following the installation of the last scheduled practice, and for a maximum of 10 years. Practices must be maintained for the official life-span of the practice, regardless of the length of the contract.

Sign Up at Your USDA Service Center:

Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties

Freehold Service Center

4000 Kozloski Rd. Box 5033, Freehold, NJ 07728
Telephone: (732) 462-0075

Hunterdon, Somerset and Union counties

Frenchtown Service Center

687 Pittstown Rd Suite 2, Frenchtown, NJ 08825
Telephone: (908) 782-4614

Morris, Sussex and Warren counties

Hackettstown Service Center

Bldg #1, 101 Bilby Rd, Hackettstown, NJ 07840
Telephone: (908) 852-2576

Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties

Hainesport Service Center

1289 Route 38, Hainesport, NJ 08036
Telephone: (609) 267-0811

Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties

Somerset Office

220 Davidson Ave, Somerset, NJ 08873
Telephone: (732) 537-6057

Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties

Vineland Service Center

1317 South Main Rd. Bldg 3, Vineland, NJ 08360
Telephone: (856) 205-1225

Gloucester and Salem counties

Woodstown Service Center

51 Cheney Road, Suite 2, Woodstown, NJ 08098
Telephone: (856) 769-1126



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